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## Administrator

### **EPA Chief Confident That Trump Administration Won't Unravel Key Climate Regulations.**

A news round-up by [SNL Financial](#) (11/28, Balasta) reported that EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy has pledged to ensure a smooth transition for the agency into the next administration, "but said Trump's transition team has yet to contact the agency about the change of power." Moreover, McCarthy "seemed confident that the campaign pledges made to unravel her key climate change regulations will not be as easy to do in practice."

## Brownfields/Superfund/Other Cleanups

### **EPA To Test Home, Delay Release Of Landfill Remediation Plan.**

The [AP](#) (11/22) reports that even as they Environmental Protection Agency announced that it will test for radioactive contamination at a home of Michael and Robbin Dailey near the Bridgeton and West Lake Landfills in St. Louis County – a "Superfund site where illegally buried nuclear waste sits near an underground fire" – EPA Region 7 Administrator Mark Hague "said Tuesday that the agency is not yet ready to announce remediation plans" for the landfills in Bridgeton. Those plans "were expected by December," but EPA gave no new timetable for their release. The AP adds that during the Cold War, nuclear waste was buried at West Lake in the 1970s, while an "underground fire has burned in recent years just a few hundred feet away at the adjacent Bridgeton Landfill." The Daileys launched a lawsuit last week after they claim a sampling collected from their home showed high levels of radioactive material.

[Reuters](#) (11/22, Gorman) reports that Tuesday, the EPA said it would delay indefinitely "its proposal for how to clean up or seal off radioactive soil buried" at the West Lake Landfill. The EPA cited "lags in receiving 'technical documents'" it needs to formulate its plan, but their excuses "drew an outcry from local officials angry at the potential public health hazard posed by the site." The EPA decided to "extend the timeline" to allow for further documentation and "review by experts, the agency said."

### **Companies Reach Agreement To Clean Contaminated Asheville Site.**

[Greenwire](#) (11/23) reported that three companies reached an agreement to spend around \$9 million to cleanup the Asheville site, "which has decades of accumulated contamination from trichloroethylene (TCE)." According to the EPA, under the cleanup plan "TCE levels are expected to fall by 95 percent."

### **Additional Reading.**

- **Duluth 'Brownfield' Developments Draw Praise.** [Duluth \(MN\) News Tribune](#). (11/27, Passi)
- **He's Championed Cleanup Of The Chesapeake Bay For Four Decades.** [Christian Science Monitor](#). (11/23)

## Climate Change

### **Trump Has Multiple Options To Undo Obama's Climate Legacy.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/25, Fountain, Goode) reported on President-elect Donald Trump's

“several tools” that he can use “to begin nullifying” President Obama’s climate policies after his inauguration, including “the little-known Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, a small outpost within the executive branch that has, since the Clinton administration, been the last stop for many regulations before they go into effect.” According to the Times, “under the control of the new administration, the office could slow President Obama’s latest regulatory initiatives by repeatedly sending them back for additional work.” In addition, the Times highlighted “other potential options for specific regulations.”

Meanwhile, auto industry experts told the Los Angeles Times (11/25, Mitchell) that “the industry will surely seek adjustments to federal regulations that force them to build cleaner, less polluting cars, and want to push deadlines into the future,” although “scrapping the Corporate Average Fuel Economy program altogether is probably not on their agenda, for several reasons.”

**Trump “Could Cost The US” With Climate Positions.** The Los Angeles Times (11/25, Halper) reported Trump “could cost the US” on a global scale because of his position on climate change, adding that “few things on Trump’s confrontational agenda put him more quickly on a collision course with the rest of the world, much of his own country and even some in his own party than his stated desire to abandon the fight against global warming.” However, the Times said “Trump may be picking a tougher fight than he knows,” because “much of the action on climate change in this country no longer plays out in federal agencies but at local commissions enforcing laws in 29 states that push public utilities to go green.”

**Shareholders Push Forward With Record Corporate Climate Votes.** Reuters (11/25, Kerber) reported activist shareholders are planning to vote on “a record number of resolutions focused on climate change at US company annual meetings in 2017, even as President-elect Donald Trump looks set to loosen environmental regulations.” Reuters added that “based on filings so far, US companies are on track to face roughly 200 resolutions on climate matters at their shareholder meetings next year, according to Rob Berridge, who follows the subject for Ceres, a sustainability advocacy group.”

**WSJournal: Trump’s Energy Agenda Is Highlight Of First 100 Days Plan.** The Wall Street Journal (11/24) editorialized that President-elect Donald Trump’s energy agenda is one of the highlights of his plan for the first 100 days of his Administration, though the paper warns that it will take a lot of work to undo or override President Obama’s current and past regulations. The Journal expressed the hope that Mr. Trump will find a way to access the more than 85 percent of area for offshore drilling that is controlled by the Federal government, arguing that doing so would improve both US economic growth and the global economy.

### **Newsday: Trump May Face Pushback On Environment.**

Newsday (NY) (11/26) editorialized that concerns over President-elect Donald Trump ruining the environment may be overstated. The article detailed several obstacles and challenges from both parties, international pushback, and Trump’s “willingness to walk back his own views” as mitigating factors against his aggressive talk about environmental regulation. While there are some concerns with Trump’s policies, particularly in coal regulation, Newsday urged people to embrace the environmental progress of the last decade, saying that “we cannot turn back from that now.”

### **Bloomberg Will Press US Mayors To Join UN Climate Pact If Trump Backs Out US.**

The New York Times (11/23, Wong) reports on Tuesday, Michael Bloomberg, former mayor of New York City, said that American cities would continue to enact climate policies no matter what [Donald] Trump and the federal government decided to do.” Bloomberg said that if Trump decided to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement, then he would urge the mayors of 128 cities in the

US to join the agreement. Bloomberg's remarks at a talk hosted by the China General Chamber of Commerce. Included praise of China's climate envoy Xie Zhenhua for saying China remained committed to tackling the issue.

### **Environmentalists, Officials Skeptical Of Trump's Pledge On Climate Accord.**

The Hill (11/26, Henry) reports that environmental activists are viewing President-elect Trump's pledge to "look very carefully" at the Paris climate change accord with skepticism. The League of Conservation Voters acknowledged that if Trump was reconsidering his hardline opposition to the accord, he has "made an enormous step forward," but Sierra Club executive director Michael Brune challenged Trump to "prove it." The international community, including Chinese officials and British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, also urged Trump to keep the US in the deal.

### **Climate Change Impacting Views Of Waterfront Real Estate.**

The New York Times (11/24, Urbina) reports in a front page story that "rising sea levels are changing the way people think about waterfront real estate." The Times says that while "demand remains strong and developers continue to build near the water in many coastal cities, homeowners across the nation are slowly growing wary of buying property in areas most vulnerable to the effects of climate change." However, according to the Times, "many economists say this reckoning" is not occurring fast enough and "some analysts" indicate "the economic impact of a collapse in waterfront property could surpass" the dot-com bubble of 2000 and real estate bubble of 2008. The Times writes that in April, "Sean Beckett, the chief economist for Freddie Mac...issued a dire prediction. It is only a matter of time, he wrote, before sea level rise and storm surges become so unbearable along the coast that people will leave, ditching their mortgages and potentially triggering another housing meltdown – except this time, it would be unlikely that these housing prices would ever recover." However, Beckett "emphasized how difficult it was to predict whether the bubble in coastal real estate would slowly deflate or suddenly pop."

### **Shell CEO: No Valuation Hit From Climate Accord.**

Reuters (11/26) reports that Shell CEO Ben van Beurden said in an interview with a Dutch newspaper that "the issue of 'stranded' reserves – deposits in the ground that cannot be used because of carbon emissions limitations – would have no impact on balance sheets." As the Paris climate accords seeks to limit production, Beurden said, "The company is valued on producible reserves that we can produce in the next 12 or 13 years. ... We should certainly be able to produce those under any climate outcome. Even if global temperatures can only rise by 2 degrees."

## **Energy**

### **Trump Plans To Repeal Oil, Natural Gas Regulations.**

Platts (11/23) reports that President-elect Donald Trump said in a YouTube video that he planned to "cancel job-killing restrictions on the production of American energy – including shale energy and clean coal – creating many millions of high-paying jobs." Analysts believe the incoming administration will "likely target [DOI] and [EPA] regulations on methane emissions from oil and gas operations, hydraulic fracturing and possibly a new plan for drilling in federal waters."

### **Analysts Suggest Fuel Efficiency, EV Sales May Accelerate Peak Demand For Oil.**

In a special report, The Economist (11/24) discusses how "dramatic improvements in fuel efficiency in America and elsewhere, thanks to standards like America's Corporate Average Fuel Economy

(CAFE), the EU's rules on CO2 emissions and those in place in China since 2012," as well as increasing sales of "electric vehicles (EVs), self-driving cars and car-sharing," can help "explain why some forecasters think demand for petrol may peak within the next 10-15 years even if the world's vehicle fleet keeps growing."

### **American Samoan Island Powered Almost Entirely By Solar.**

The Washington Post (11/24, Harvey) spotlights American Samoa which is switching from diesel generators to 100 percent renewable energy. The easternmost island of Ta'u has just been equipped with a new microgrid, solar capacity and battery storage. "It's enough to power the entire island night and day." The American Samoa Power Authority solicited a system which includes 5,000 SolarCity solar panels and 60 Tesla Powerpack battery storage systems. "The new microgrid could save the island nearly 110,000 gallons of diesel fuel each year, which amounts to about 2.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions."

## **International**

### **Canada Plans New Fuel Economy Rules.**

Reuters (11/25) reports that Canada's environment department said on Friday it will reduced carbon footprints for all fuels to meet the country's 2030 greenhouse gas emissions target. Canada's new measures "will aim to reduce fuels' carbon intensity, a measure of emissions relative to the amount of energy derived, according to the environment department."

### **India Bans Fireworks In Capital Area After Dangerous Air Pollution Levels Recorded.**

The New York Times (11/25, Najar, Barry) reports the Indian Supreme Court on Friday prohibited firecracker sales across the National Capital Region in response to the dangerous particle levels of air pollution discovered earlier this month. The combination of emissions and acrid smoke from fireworks used in Diwali celebrations brought such levels to more than 16 times the Indian government's permitted dangerous particles levels.

## **Other News**

### **Strassel: Ebell A "Bold" Choice To Lead EPA.**

Kimberley A. Strassel write in her column for the Wall Street Journal (11/24) lauding Myron Ebell as a potential pick to lead the EPA under the Trump administration. She writes that Ebell has spend year fighting against environmental regulations, adding that lifting such regulations is seen by conservatives as a way to boost growth. Faced with environmentalist opposition to the pick and Trump environmental policies, Strassel argues that Trump needs unconventional advisers who will not back down.

### **EPA Recognizes Citrus County Utilities' Water Conservation Program.**

The Citrus County (FL) Chronicle (11/28) reported that the EPA "honored Citrus County Utilities' water conservation program with its Promotional Partner of the Year award" for its role in promoting water efficiency.

## **Pesticides**

## **Court Rules That EPA Guidance On Pesticides Not Subject To Legal Review.**

Greenwire (11/27, Reilly) reported, "A federal judge sided with U.S. EPA this week in a lawsuit claiming the agency abdicated its duty to protect bees from an insecticide linked to pollinator deaths." According to Judge William Alsup's 21-page opinion, "Perhaps the EPA should have done more to protect them, but such policy decisions are for the agency to make." Court Rules That EPA Guidance On Pesticides Not Subject To Legal Review. Bloomberg BNA (11/28, Rizzuto) reported that a coalition of groups "alleged the EPA failed to protect pollinators by authorities it has under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act."

## **EPA Cracks Down On New Rodenticide Programs In Major Cities.**

USA Today (11/23, Madhani) reported that the EPA has notified major cities that the use of dry ice to exterminate rats violates federal law. The method "proved more efficient at killing rodents and cheaper than using conventional rat poisons in cities such as Boston, Chicago and New York, which all recently launched programs to test the method." Boston's legal team is actively applying for a permit from the EPA to restart the program. Said William Christopher, head of Boston's Inspectional Services Department, "We didn't see this thing as a pesticide by the classic definition, because dry ice is used everywhere. ...This is not necessarily one of those logical things, it's a regulatory issue, and we'll respect everything they want us to do."

## **Rules/Regulations/Policy**

### **Experts Believe Trump Is Unlikely To Drop CAFE Standards.**

The Los Angeles Times (11/25, Mitchell) reported that President-elect Trump is unlikely to scrap the Corporate Average Fuel Economy program, but notes that the industry will "seek adjustments to federal regulations" that push back emissions targets. The standard isn't likely to be scrapped entirely for a variety of reasons, including global demand for energy efficient cars. Michelle Krebs, senior analyst at Autotrader, believes that even if the CAFE standards are dropped, it wouldn't stop auto makers "from having to develop fuel-efficient, clean vehicles for the rest of the world," where regulations remain intact.

### **EPA Completes Rule Requiring More Ethanol Blended Into 2017 Gasoline Supply.**

The Wall Street Journal (11/23, Harder) reported the EPA on Wednesday finalized a rule requiring refineries to blend 19.28 billion gallons of ethanol and other biofuels into the gasoline supply in 2017 – 1.17 billion gallons more than this year's requirement.

Reuters (11/23, Prentice) reported an ADM spokesperson said in an email, "We are...pleased to see that the administration has made an improvement over previous obligations for biodiesel as part of the total advanced category, though we believe the administration could yet do more to offer the certainty the industry requires to continue to grow and create good American jobs."

**EPA Set To Increase Biofuel Targets For Program Trump May Cut.** The EPA on Wednesday said "it would nudge up biofuel mandates" in 2017 as part of what the Washington Post (11/23, Mufson) calls "a troubled and complex program to promote non-corn-based ethanol and biodiesel that has fallen far short of the goals Congress adopted in 2007." The program, which already faced strong criticism from many oil refiners, increases biofuel targets "more than what some industry officials expected." The article says the program may be cut once President-elect Trump enters office.

Similar reports were provided by the Financial Times (11/23, Meyer), The Hill (11/23, Henry), Bloomberg Politics (11/23), another story by Reuters (11/23, Prentice), the Minneapolis Star Tribune (11/24, Hughlett), the Houston Chronicle (11/23, Osborne), and the Washington Times (11/23, Wolfgang).

**A Bipartisan Opportunity To Move Forward On Biofuels Policy.** Writing for The Hill's (11/23, Stock) "Congress Blog," James Stock, a professor and energy policy scholar, praised the EPA's decision, which he says will enable policymakers to "focus on the real promise of the RFS: the domestic second-generation biofuels that create American jobs, enhance energy security, and significantly reduce carbon emissions."

**New EPA Ethanol Mandate Applauded By Minnesota Ethanol Producers.** The Minneapolis Star Tribune (11/24, Hughlett) reports that EPA on Wednesday mandated a record 19.28 billion gallons of biofuel use in 2017, "a victory for the ethanol industry, which counts Minnesota as one of its top producers." Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar called the rule a "kind of a Thanksgiving surprise." Harold Wolle, president of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, said of the 2017 mandate. "We have been fighting to get the renewable obligations up to the statutory limits for a number of years."

### **Agencies Push "Midnight" Regulations Before Obama Leaves Office.**

The Christian Science Monitor (11/27, Porter) reported that although President-elect Trump and congressional Republicans are likely to "kill any controversial late-in-the-game moves" by the President, Federal agencies "are pushing for a flurry of so-called 'midnight' regulations on everything from the environment to transportation and financial marketplaces." While lawmakers "have warned agency heads to avoid rushing to finalize rules or regulations before Obama leaves office," Politico reported Sunday that the White House "was reviewing as many as 98 final regulations, as of Nov. 15, that could be implemented before Mr. Trump takes office, including 17 with an estimated annual economic impact of \$100 million or more."

The Hill (11/27, Wilson) reported that environmental groups are pushing the Administration to "wrap up as many rules, regulations and protections as possible" before Trump takes office. Critics see the Administration "rushing to clear as much paper as possible following Trump's surprise win," and they argue that the "haste with which the administration is promulgating the rules...may mean the final result isn't as effective as possible, or necessary." While Trump "has promised to roll back many Obama-era rules and executive orders on his first day in the White House," conservationists hope the Administration "is structuring some of the late environmental regulations in ways that will make it more difficult for a subsequent administration to reverse."

## **Water**

### **Michigan Implements Side-By-Side Training For Flint Water Plant Workers.**

MLive (MI) (11/23) reported that the state of Michigan is bringing in experts and specialized training for its regulators to ensure that in the wake of the Flint water crisis, all plant operators receive adequate training. Bryce Feighner of the Department of Environmental Quality "said all aspects of the new training have started and a plant official said the program is off to a promising start." EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy previously said that once staff are trained and their credentials are verified, the city will still be required to "demonstrate they can treat raw water from the Karegnondi Water Authority for a minimum of three months."

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